ISSN 0258-5146

UNEP North America News

United Nations Environment Programme

February-April 1991
Volume 6, Numbers 1& 2

To get an accurate picture of ecological devastation in and around Kuwait,

UNEP is coordinating a 90-day international effort to survey and assess the damage, the core of an action plan that was hammered out in Geneva at two emergency meetings (February 5-6 and March 15) of UN agencies, international organizations and concerned governments. The action plan went into effect immediately; the core team of 30 to 40 experts was due in Kuwait by mid-April.

The framework for Kuwait's environmental cleanup envisages four separate but linked areas where action is required—oil in water, oil on land, smoke in the atmosphere and the destruction of land resources, with special emphasis on mitigating their impact on the health and livelihood of the 10 million people living in the region. The problem, as one Saudi official said, is "now that Kuwait is free, it's not fit to live in."

A month after the war ended only 20 of approximately 600 burning oil wells had been capped, according to Richard Golob of Golob's Oil Pollution Bulletin. Like flamethrowers they shot as much as six million barrels of oil a day into the air and, if not burning, onto the ground. Thick soot from the smoke plumes created dusk at noon in Kuwait City, with temperatures 10-15 degrees below normal. Health officials reported seeing many elderly Kuwaitis and younger children with respiratory problems, which they could not solve under the circumstances.

The oily smoke, a noxious blend of chemicals, cast a pall that caused "black rain" in Turkey, Iran and Iraq and smoky clouds that reached as far as the Soviet Union, Afghanistan and Pakistan. The toxic fallout could contaminate agricultural and grazing lands and wildlife habitats up to 1,200 miles in all directions, the British Meteorological Office said. Over time, the petroleum-based toxins will "bioaccumulate," or increase in concentration, as humans eat the birds, fish and animals that have fed on contaminated plants, insects and smaller sea creatures. The smoky fallout could last three years or more since oilwell firefighter Red Adair estimated it would take at least that long to put the fires out.

The New York Times

Wells are on fire in all of Kuwait's developed oilfields.

The size of the massive oil slick that appeared in the final days of the war—originally estimated at 11 million barrels—was downgraded by experts to somewhere between half a million and 2.5 million barrels. In the war's aftermath, few noted that it still was the largest oil spill in history. A Scandinavian oil expert was quoted by Environment News Service as saying the extent of the calamity was being deliberately downplayed: "We're looking at truly staggering cleanup costs. Who's going to spend that kind of money to protect beaches no one will ever get to?" It also meant that the extent of non-human life lost will never be known.

A UNEP team surveying damage before the war ended found considerable ecological impact on the land, the result of tens of thousands of bombing raids and huge numbers of off-road vehicles such as tanks. The result was a ➥

➡ landscape of badly disturbed soil and plant life in arid areas that are easily eroded and very slow to recover. Complicating the situation were an estimated 500,000 mines in the desert and in the Gulf, presenting a mortal danger to farmers, herders and fishermen as they try to resume their lives.

The cost of the UN assessment and action plan—initially estimated at $2.5 million—will be borne by the eight Gulf states, major donor countries and institutions. Japan was the first contributor, announcing it would give $1.1 million to UNEP's Technical Cooperation Trust Fund. This will finance:

- surveys by multidisciplinary teams to provide, analyze and evaluate data;
- a computerized database for assessment of the environmental damage;
- formulation of a detailed rehabilitation plan; and
- coordinated action by the UN system, other organizations and governments to implement the plan of operation.

While UNEP is the overall coordinator of the plan and will use its Global Environmental Monitoring System (GEMS) for data gathering and analysis, a host of other UN agencies will be responsible for activities in their spheres: the International Maritime Organization (IMO) for oil spills; the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for fisheries and terrestrial ecosystems; the World Health Organization (WHO) and UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) for public health; and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), Habitat and others for socio-economic aspects.

The new fund also will be used to augment efforts by the Gulf states to strengthen their Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME)—one of ten Regional Seas Programs initiated by UNEP—and to transform its Marine Emergency Mutual Aid Centre (MEMAC) into an operational unit. Ironically, ROPME had just devised a plan to clear the Gulf of oil slicks and other remnants of the eight-year war between Iraq and Iran when Iraq invaded Kuwait in August.

Against growing evidence of chemical destruction of the ozone layer, 62 nations met in Montreal in September 1987 and agreed to control the production and use of certain ozone-devouring chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and halons. The original target was to reduce production and use 50 percent by the end of the century. When this agreement was reached under UNEP's aegis and with U.S. leadership, no ozone depletion had been observed over the United States.

Just eight months later, ozone layer destruction had increased to such an extent that when the Parties to the Montreal Protocol met for the first time (May 2-5 1989, in Helsinki) they recognized they must act immediately to phase out CFCs and strengthen controls on halons. The sense of urgency the U.S. and other participating nations felt resulted in a June 1990 agreement to completely phase out CFCs and other ozone-depleting chemicals by the end of the decade (for developing countries the deadline was 2010). U.S. urgency was fueled by preliminary data from satellites and ground stations that high-level ozone over the United States had decreased 1.5 percent.

The readjusted targets for the Protocol took effect March 7, 1991. Less than one month later, on April 4th, the Environmental Protection Agency announced that ozone-layer loss over the United States was advancing twice as fast as scientists had expected—4.5 to 5 percent in the last decade.

"It is stunning information," EPA Administrator William K. Reilly said. "It is unexpected, it is disturbing, and it possesses implications we have not yet had time to fully explore." These new measurements were taken over more than 11 years by NASA's special satellite-based ozone mapping spectrometer, but, *The New York Times* reported, EPA analyzed its decade's worth of data only in the past few months. According to these new measurements, ozone losses over the last decade occurred at the same high rate throughout the Northern Hemisphere temperate zone, which includes North America, Europe, the Soviet Union and most of Asia.

The first round of negotiations on a global law to control climate change ended February 14th in Chantilly, Virginia, with most of the 130 nations present confounded by U.S. reluctance to reduce emissions of the most important greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide.

Last summer, hundreds of scientists on the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) agreed that climate change will have a devastating effect in the next century unless emissions of greenhouse gases are quickly cut by more than 60 percent. Priority, they said, should go to limiting emissions of carbon dioxide, a major greenhouse gas caused by burning gasoline and other fossil fuels.

In Virginia, the U.S. "action plan" to limit gases that trap heat in earth's atmosphere was renamed an "inaction plan" by critics since its steps had already been taken for other reasons: to comply with the recently revised Clean Air Act and the Montreal Protocol that protects the ozone layer. The U.S. argument was that these actions will compensate for a 15 percent increase in carbon dioxide emissions so that by the year 2000 the American contribution to global warming will be no greater than in 1987. It would, however, increase after that. In contrast to the U.S., the European Community will stabilize CO_2 emissions at 1990 levels by 2000 and reduce them after that.

The IPCC report warned that without limits on emissions, temperatures and sea levels could rise to unacceptable levels, disrupting agriculture and flooding low-lying states. When delegates from Bangladesh said their country would be inundated if global warming raised sea levels, a U.S. delegate responded, according to an article in the Washington Post, "This is not a disaster, it is merely a change. The area won't have disappeared; it will just be under water. Where you now have cows, you will have fish."

Members of the U.S. delegation said they were prepared for substantial differences in outlook. They told *UNEP North America News* they had two main goals in this first round of talks: to establish an effective negotiating process and to develop a negotiating text—"even if we have to heavily bracket, or mark off, areas where there are differences not likely to be resolved in the first session," one team member said.

Other areas still to be tackled include a climate fund to help developing countries in their response to global warming and the need for periodic review of the economic implications of emission strategies. A related, contentious situation is whether a proposed Tropical Forest Convention will be part of the Climate Convention, as the Europeans and some others want, or freestanding as the U.S. would prefer so it can address such issues as biodiversity and indigenous peoples.

The next negotiating session on the Convention on Climate Change will be June 16-29 in Geneva. The third session, September 9-20, and the fourth in December will finish the framework legal agreement to be presented to heads of state for signing at the June 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil.

When delegates from Bangladesh said their country might be flooded if global warming raised sea levels, a U.S. delegate responded, "This is not a disaster, it is merely a change. The area won't have disappeared; it will just be under water. Where you now have cows, you will have fish."

UNEP's free environmental information referral service, INFOTERRA, fielded requests from more than 18,000 people in 90 countries last year, an increase of 10 percent over 1989. The service now has offices in 138 countries. For U.S. and Canadian INFOTERRA offices, see the last page of this newsletter

READEX FICHE

Canada's Green Plan is a model for the world, UNEP Executive Director Mostafa K. Tolba believes. Dr. Tolba made his comments while in Montreal on UN business.

Canada's innovative five-year environmental action plan costs C$3 billion and directly involves more than 40 federal departments and agencies. It has more than 100 specific commitments for initiatives to clean up, protect and enhance Canada's land, water and air, its renewable resources (forests, soil, water and fisheries), the Arctic, and its open spaces and species. The plan contains initiatives to dramatically reduce waste generation and energy use. It also addresses global environmental security (stabilizing greenhouses gases, phasing out ozone-depleting substances by 2000), environmentally responsible decision-making (through information to new and existing networks), and improving the country's ability to respond to environmental emergencies.

More than 10,000 Canadians attended a series of information sessions on the plan and submitted comments before its release at the end of 1990. A "rolling plan," with targets and goals to be reviewed and updated annually in response to emerging issues and priorities, it will become a continually evolving five-year plan as another year is added at the end of each review.

Environment Minister Robert de Cotret has invited ongoing public participation in shaping the plan's goals and meeting its objectives. Dr. Tolba agrees: "I think what is important for everybody, non-governmental organizations and others, is that they hold the government responsible for implementation of the goals and targets."

For a 20-page summary of *Canada's Green Plan for a healthy environment*, write Jocelyn Menard, Environment Canada, Les Terrasses de la Chaudiere, 10 Wellington St., Hull, Quebec K1A 0H3, or phone 1-800-668-6767.

The U.S. and Canada are asking for public input as they prepare for next year's global policymaking forum, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), scheduled for June 1-12, 1992, in Brazil.

The Council on Environmental Quality, President Bush's environmental policy advisory body, and Canada's new National Secretariat for UNCED '92 are holding public consultations on the national reports they must submit to the Conference Secretariat by July of this year. The reports are considered an important first step in the process of developing national positions on the issues to be addressed by the UN Conference:

- combating climate change, ozone layer depletion and transboundary air pollution;
- protecting water and land resources, and conserving biological diversity;
- preventing the illegal international trade in wastes and toxic chemicals;
- improving the living and working environment of the poor through integrated development;
- protecting human health conditions and improving the quality of life; and
- finding the financial resources for information, environmental education and technology transfer.

With only minimal budget and time, the **Council on Environmental Quality** has asked representatives of leading U.S. environment and development organizations to comment on the draft report being compiled by a wide range of federal agencies and to participate in four small issue-oriented roundtables to be held around the country (April 22-23 in San Francisco, May 9-10 in Baltimore, May 17-18 at the American Bar Association meeting in Virginia, and June 13-14 in Denver). After the U.S. national report is submitted to the Conference Secretariat, three or four public hearings will discuss possible approaches, actions and recommendations on issues of particular concern. At the same time, CEQ will take advantage of meetings already planned by grassroots groups for further input into the process.

Contact Patricia Bliss Guest, Council on Environmental Quality, 722 Jackson Place, NW, Washington, DC 20503, telephone (202) 395-5750, fax (202) 395-3744.

➥

➦ **Canada has established a National Secretariat for UNCED '92** within Environment Canada to work with External Affairs, International Trade Canada and the Canadian International Development Agency on national preparations for the UN Conference. It has already begun developing a comprehensive consultation process for all "stakeholders" representating business, industry, citizens' groups, the provinces and territories. The first consultative meeting February 12th helped prepare Canadian positions for the March 18-April 12 UNCED Preparatory Committee meeting in Geneva.

For information Julie Hauser, National Secretariat UNCED '92, Environment Canada, Les Terrasses de la Chaudière, 10 Wellington Street, 4th floor, Hull, Quebec K1A 0H3, phone (819) 953-1420, or fax (819) 953-3557.

UNEP's friends in the U.S. and Canada

are actively supporting its efforts to promote ecologically responsible behavior from the grassroots to the global level.

In the U.S., the Friends of the United Nations Environment Programme (FUNEP) recently changed its name to the U.S. Committee for the United Nations Environment Programme (US/UNEP) "to make UNEP as well known, positively regarded and fully supported by the public as, for example, UNICEF," founder and President Richard A. Hellman said. "We must take our message boldly to the public, the media and government leaders because now, more than ever before, it is a vital part of the solution to our planet's problems."

For information, US/UNEP, 2013 Q Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009, telephone (202) 234-3600, fax (202) 332-3221.

The Canadian Association for the United Nations Environment Programme takes an entrepreneurial approach to its outreach. Among other projects, the UNEP-Canada Association is working with district Rotary Clubs on plans for a benefit concert and global telecast in December on the theme "Preserve Planet Earth" with live feeds to Toronto from several international locations. The proceeds, said Executive Director Ron Smith, will be used to support a variety of environmental projects worldwide.

Contact UNEP-Canada Association, 121 Avenue Road, Toronto, Ontario M5R 2G3, Canada, telephone 416/923-1591, fax (416) 924-8586.

New publications

What does UNEP do? A completely revised and handsomely illustrated *UNEP Profile* covers nearly 20 years of achievements, from protecting the ozone layer and marine environment to working with UN agencies and governments on ecologically sound development planning, education and training.

The 48-page *UNEP Profile* is available free from Janet Edwards at UNEP, DC2-0803, United Nations, New York, NY 10017; phone (212) 963-8093.

Tropical Rainforest is a richly illustrated book that surveys "our most valuable and endangered habitat" and provides a seven-step blueprint for its survival. Based on 25 years of exhaustive research by author-photographer Arnold Newman, it is "a volume as readable as it is timely," UNEP's Dr. Noel J. Brown said.

***Tropical Rainforest* by Arnold Newman, 256 pages hardcover, is available for $40 in bookstores or from Facts On File, 460 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016; telephone (212) 683-2244.**

A program for worldwide action to save our planet's living resources has made significant progress since it was launched two years ago by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), UNEP and the World Resources Institute (WRI).

The problem is that 25 percent of the world's species may be lost in the next several decades along with their habitats and ecosystems if present trends continue. Scientists say this is dangerous because these are humanity's life-support mechanisms, and we do not know which components maintain essential functions.

This is why IUCN, UNEP and WRI joined forces with partner organizations to develop a global strategy and action plan to conserve biodiversity, stimulate action, provide information, improve policies and methods for conserving biodiversity, provide technical advice and promote biological diversity as a major development issue.

The **Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Programme** now has 38 partner organizations around the world, such as the Plant Genetic Resources Centre in Ethiopia, Smithsonian Institution and World Bank, and consultants such as the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization and UNESCO.

These partners are preparing a **Biodiversity Conservation Strategy** and **Decade Action Plan for Conserving Biodiversity** for release next year, in time for the Fourth World Congress on Protected Areas and the policymaking UN Conference on Environment and Development in June 1992 in Brazil.

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

1989
- Preliminary regional consultations (Bogota, Costa Rica, Nairobi, Bangkok)
- Launch Biodiversity Strategy Programme
- Release of: ***Keeping Options Alive: The Scientific Basis for Conserving Biodiversity***

1990
- Establish International Coordinating Group
- Release of: ***Conserving the World's Biological Diversity*** (CI, IUCN, WRI, WWF, and World Bank)
- Research by organizing and partner institutions
- Advisory, field and technical support activities
- Prepare draft Biodiversity Status Report
- IUCN General Assembly

1991
- Regional workshops and consultations
- Release research reports
- Drafting of Strategy and Decade Action Plan
- Release Biodiversity Status Report (November 1991)

1992
- Release Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Decade Action Plan at the Fourth World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas (February 1992)
- United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Brazil, June 1992)
- Promotion, Implementation, and Follow-up Activities

U.S. funding for projects that preserve biological diversity has increased dramatically, according to *Investing in Biological Diversity: U.S. Research and Conservation Efforts in Developing Countries*, a report published in March by WRI. It found that public and private institutions invested $62.9 million in 1989—two-thirds more than in 1987—in 1,100 projects in 127 developing countries. "Yet," WRI President James Gustave Speth said, "the problems today are so great that we cannot be lulled into thinking this is enough. Even this increased effort will not stop, let alone reverse, the tide. In fact, Americans spend a thousand times more going to the movies than trying to preserve the earth's diversity and genetic heritage."

For information on the Biodiversity Strategy Programme, contact Dr. Kenton R. Miller, World Resources Institute, 1709 New York Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 2006; telephone (202) 662-2526, fax (202) 638-0036. To buy the 96-page *Investing in Biological Diversity*, send $15.50 to WRI Publications, P.O. Box 4852, Hampden Station, Baltimore, MD 21211.

For the first time "green Nobel" prizes for environmental leadership and

humanitarian excellence will be presented at the UN's World Environment Day ceremony in New York on June 5th. Ever since 1972 and the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Claes Nobel had believed there should a Nobel Prize for environmental achievement. But when he approached the Nobel Foundation, he found they were constrained to the original scientific categories established by his great-granduncle Alfred. The present Mr. Nobel then decided to create a separate but equally prestigious award, the Earth Prize.

His dream has now become reality. For this first year both young people and adults will be honored as "earth laureates." The prizes will be given first at the grassroots level and on alternate years at a "summit level" to leaders of organizations, institutions, corporations or nations. In future, when the awards are fully implemented, prizes will be given in seven categories for the elimination of hunger and poverty, pollution abatement, energy, conservation of nature and natural resources, population balance, earth security and earth ethics. Substantial financial awards accompany the prize in each category.

The sponsoring organization is United Earth. A corporate partner, Good Housekeeping Magazine, has provided the organization with an office. To keep the momentum going, United Earth plans to provide schools with educational materials and to develop a United Earth Corps—a Peace Corps for the environment—that UNEP's Executive Director Mostafa K.Tolba said "could be of great significance for the healing of our ailing planet." **Contact Ms. Brooke Newell, President, United Earth, 959 Eighth Avenue, 5th floor, New York, NY 10019; telephone (212) 649-2487.**

The aging UN building in New York will have a youthful look on June 5th,

World Environment Day, as thousands of students stream through its august halls to participate in the General Assembly of Youth.

Last year, which was the fifth UNEP Youth Environment Forum, more than 4,000 young people took part. This year the event will run for two days rather than one, with workshops in the morning of the 5th on such major issues as recycling (the area where students are doing the most work), hazardous waste management, energy conservation and climate, saving spaces and species. The Target Corporation, which assisted in last year's youth forum, this year has become a full corporate partner in the event.

The first Earth Prizes, or "green Nobels," will be awarded in a World Environment Day ceremony later in the day at the UN to outstanding young people and adults for environmental leadership and humanitarian excellence (see story above.)

On the following day, the students will gather in the General Assembly Hall for a session showcasing their achievements around the world. More than 31 environmental success stories will be told in person and through videos. Finally, the young men and women will present a declaration of their concerns and actions as a contribution to the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil.

Contact Ms. Dulcie de Montagnac, UNEP Information and Public Affairs Unit (IPA), DC1-590, United Nations, New York, NY 10017, telephone (212) 963-4931, fax (212) 963-4361.

UNEP North America News

"Impossible to imagine even two years ago that environment would be one of five UN priorities for the next two years," a UN official said soon after the 45th session of the General Assembly concluded in December. (The other four priorities are peace and security, controlling the international drug traffic, development for disadvantaged countries and a special focus on Africa.)

One reason for an environmental priority is the UN Conference on Environment and Development, to be held next year in Brazil. The General Assembly decided it will be June 1-12, 1992, in Rio de Janeiro and urged representation at the head-of-state and government level [Resolution 211], which would make it the largest summit meeting in history—an Earth Summit.

Another reason is **the growing number of serious ecological problems that require international attention, leading the General Assembly to resolve to:**

- appeal urgently for international support for the victims and areas most affected by the Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident [Resolution 190];
- ask the International Atomic Energy Agency to find a means to effectively prohibit any dumping of radioactive or nuclear wastes [Resolution 58K];
- request a comprehensive, analytical study of new and renewable sources of energy in preparation for the UN Conference in Brazil [Resolution 208];
- establish a negotiating process for a framework convention on climate change, to be ready for signing at the 1992 Conference [Resolution 212];
- analyze how environmental concerns affect international trade [Resolution 210], a report for the March-April meeing in Geneva of the committee preparing for the UN Conference on Environment and Development;
- produce a State of the Environment Report on Antarctica and a study on establishing a UN-sponsored scientific research station there [Resolution 78A];
- pursue efforts to make a healthy environment a basic human right [Resolution 94];
- declare 1993 The International Year for the World's Indigenous People for international cooperation "in such areas as [their] human rights, environment, development, education, health and so on" [Resolution 164]; and
- request a study on the possible reallocation of military resources to civilian activities to protect the environment [Resolution 58N]. The vote was 138 in favor, 3 against (France, UK and USA) and 12 abstentions (mostly EEC, Canada and Japan). **For further information, contact Ms. Martine Coursil at UNEP, (212) 963-8137.**

"Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind," one of the world's most eminent scientists, Albert Einstein, once said. This is why UNEP created the Environmental Sabbath: to bridge the gap between environmental science and religion. And it is why thousands of faith communities throughout North America join together in celebrating the "Earth rest day" every year on the Friday, Saturday or Sunday nearest June 5th, World Environment Day. This year the dates are June 7, 8 and 9, although the Environmental Sabbath can—and perhaps should—be celebrated at any time.

In 1991, the focus will be on children and the environment. The reason may surprise many; it is that more children will be born in this decade than in any decade before—or after. At the same time, "There are clear moral reasons why efforts to end environmental degradation must focus on children," UNEP and UNICEF declared in their mutual State of the Environment Report on Children and the Environment. "Their young bodies make them far more vulnerable than adults to the poisons we spew into the air and toxins we sow on Earth."

To help guide this year's ceremonies, UNEP is producing a special edition of its *Environmental Sabbath Newsletter*, with prayers, poems, activities, music and drawings about—and many times by—children who are our future. **Contact UNEP Regional Office for North America, DC2-0803, United Nations, New York, NY 10017; (212) 963-8093.**

A green think tank has been set up in Aspen, Colorado, to provide scientists, who usually work intensively in one field, with a planetary perspective on how global environmental issues relate to their own work. It also will teach students in the "ultimate field trip" that combines hometown scientific observations with satellite data on the environment.

The Aspen Global Change Institute was founded by NASA, UNEP, John Denver's Windstar Foundation and the Amway Corporation in 1990. The diversity of their partnership mirrors the goal of the Institute: to share accurate scientific information with industrial leaders, educators, policymakers and the general public so all can work together to improve environmental management.

The core program is an intensive summer session, in which scientists may spend from one to three weeks in an on-going interdisciplinary dialogue on a specific global topic and related scientific disciplines: for example, global atmospheric change and its connection to climate modelling, atmospheric chemistry, forestry and population dynamics.

The Institute will try to bridge the gap between scientist and student by developing new courses of study, teacher training materials and action-oriented field activities. Its Ground Truth Studies project will combine the use of satellite information on earth systems with student observations and monitoring of local environmental conditions. In this way, students will be able connect their measurements with other schools and the research community.

Contact John Katzenberger, Director, Aspen Global Change Institute, 100 East Francis, Aspen, CO 81611; telephone (303) 925-7376., or fax (303) 925-7097.

The new International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives may not yet have a permanent office, but it already has an impressive dossier of start-up programs.

Created last September at the World Congress of Local Governments for a Sustainable Future, which was held under UNEP auspices at the United Nations in New York, the Council's Executive Committee recently decided on the following start-up programs:

- **Local Agenda 21**: to provide local government input into the international action agenda, Agenda 21, currently being drafted for the UN Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in Brazil next year;
- **Urban CO_2**: a consortium of 12 cities developing and implementing strategies for dramatic reductions of urban carbon dioxide, considered a primary culprit in global warming;
- **The Water Systems Project:** a coalition of Latin American and Caribbean cities developing a framework for delivery, protection and provision of water resources for low-income settlements.

The Council's Executive Committee elected John Chatfield, U.K., as Chairman and Luis Villafuerte, Philippines, as Vice Chairman. The organizer of last September's Congress, Jeb Brugmann, was appointed Secretary General for a three-year term. The Council's World Secretariat and North American headquarters will be in Toronto, Canada, and the European headquarters will be in Freiburg, Germany, as of this summer.

For information, Jeb Brugman, Secretary General, ICLEI, 763 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02139; phone (617) 491-6124, fax (617) 661-1089.

Canada also will host an **International Conference on Innovative Rural Communities** June 23-26 in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. The conference will emphasize success stories and explore how rural communities are adapting and innovating to achieve sustainable environments for their residents.

Contact: Floyd W. Dykeman, Director, Rural and Small Town Research and Studies Progamme, Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick E0A 3C0, Canada.

Calendar

March-April		
18-12	UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) Prep. Committee	Geneva, Switzerland
April		
8-13	African Regional Preparatory Conference for UNCED '92 in Brazil *UN Economic Commission for Africa*	Cairo, Egypt
10-12	Second World Industry Conference on Environmental Management *International Chamber of Commerce and UNEP*	Rotterdam, Netherlands
14-20	Latin American NGOs plan strategy for UNCED '92 in Brazil	Las Lenas, Argentina
15-19	Conference on Agriculture and Environment, the first held by a UN agency *FAO and the Netherlands Government*	's Hertogenbosch, Holland
17-19	Third International Terra Mater seminar on environmental ethics	Gubbio, Italy
22	Earth Day, focusing on the children of the world	Worldwide
22-23	First Roundtable to Discuss the U.S. National Report for UNCED *President's Council on Environmental Quality and invited NGOs*	San Francisco, California
May		
9-10	Second Roundtable to Discuss the U.S. National Report for UNCED *President's Council on Environmental Quality and invited NGOs*	Baltimore, Maryland
17-18	Third Roundtable to Discuss the U.S. National Report for UNCED *President's Council on Environmental Quality and invited NGOs*	ABA meeting in Virginia
20-31	Sixteenth Session of the UNEP Governing Council	Nairobi, Kenya
27-30	Symposium on Women and Children First (UNCED)	Port of Spain, Trinidad
June		
5	World Environment Day	Worldwide
7-9	Environmental Sabbath—Earth Rest Day	Houses of worship
10-13	World Conference on Human Health and Chemical Accidents *World Health Organization, OECD, UNEP, International Labor Organization*	Utrecht, Netherlands
13-14	Final Roundtable to Discuss the U.S. National Report for UNCED *President's Council on Environmental Quality and invited NGOs*	Denver, Colorado
15-20	Metro World 1991 on urban environment and development issues *Metro Toronto Council*	Toronto, Ontario
16-29	Second Negotiating Session, UN Convention on Climate Change	Geneva, Switzerland

Eighty-three countries have banned the import of foreign wastes since 1987

in response to the recent explosion of international waste trade schemes, according to Greenpeace USA, which has been monitoring the toxic trade for several years. The environmental organization's recently published inventory, *The International Trade in Wastes*,* also notes that in 1989 the EEC joined with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries in prohibiting the export of hazardous and radioactive wastes to less industrialized countries.

On March 19, legal and technical experts on the trade in wastes met at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi to develop a framework for "adequate and speedy compensation for damage" from violations of the international law to monitor and control the trade in wastes. The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous ➥

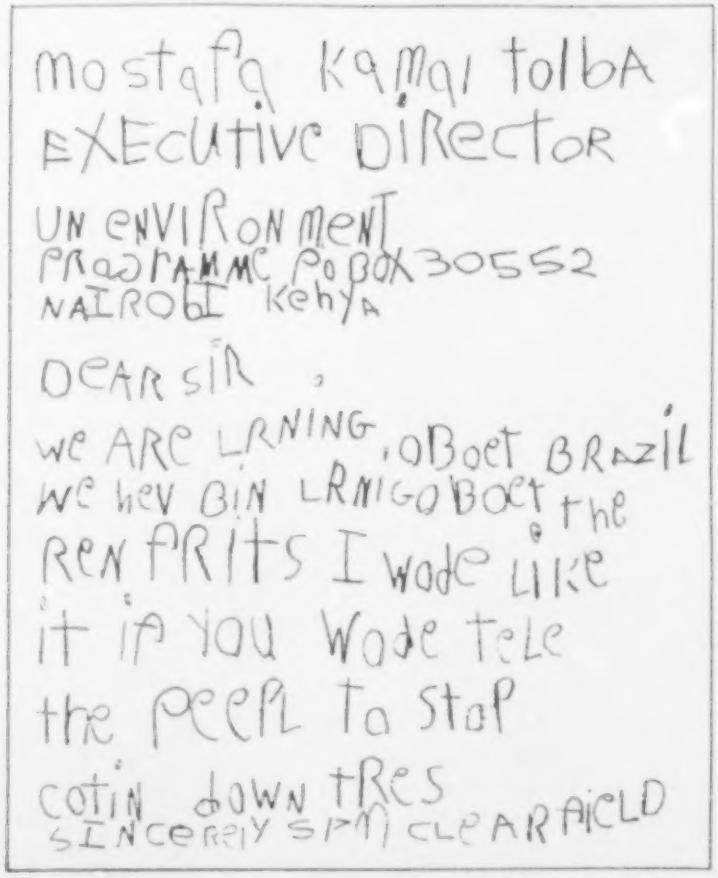
➥ Wastes and their Disposal was signed into being on March 22, 1989. So far, it has been ratified by only nine countries of the 20 needed for it to go into effect. UNEP Executive Director Mostafa K. Tolba told the recent experts' meeting, "We need to supplement the Convention, and very soon, with a Protocol" to strengthen it.

The pace of ratification has been slow, Greenpeace reports, because of a split between most developing nations, which want a total ban on waste exports to their countries, and the industrialized countries, which maintain it is preferable to control the trade in waste rather than ban it outright. At present, the Convention requires that waste exporters receive the written consent of importing nations, a provision consonant with existing U.S. and EEC laws.
*** *The International Trade in Wastes*, February 1991, 400 pages, costs $20 from Greenpeace USA, 1436 U Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009; telephone (202) 462-1177.**

At a rock concert in New York postcards addressed to UNEP were handed out, asking its Executive Director Dr. Mostafa K. Tolba to do everything possible within the UN system to stop tropical forest destruction.

Dr. Tolba received 4,492 cards and 1,634 letters in the two-year period following that September 1988 rock concert, not only from the U.S. but from people in many countries. The writers were young and old and from all walks of life, but they had one thing in common: all of them were asking for action to save the forests. Similar requests with 6,700 signatures on petitions came from Italy, Australia and Asia. At the same time, UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar received more than three million signatures from 23 countries urging the protection of tropical and temperate forests.

The culmination of this campaign is that the whole issue of forests, deforestation and reforestation will be extensively discussed at the June 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and it is possible that a Convention for the proper environmental management of tropical forests will be signed by the heads of state attending this first-ever Earth Summit.



A primary goal of the Earth Summit

Secretary-General Maurice Strong told *Diplomatic World Bulletin*, is to put environmental issues at the center of economic policymaking.

"If we are going to do something about the environment," Strong said, then "we have to come out of '92 with the basis of a fundamentally changed economic direction." The UN Conference he heads, on Environment and Development, will be in Brazil June 1-12, 1992.

A start has been made. Strong, a successful international businessman who led the first UN environment conference in Stockholm in 1972, noted a major change in corporate attitude. Twenty years ago, the business sector was suspicious and defensive, he said; today it is deeply concerned and mobilized, with a Business Council for Sustainable Development expressly created to ensure a high level of corporate input into preparations for the UN conference. He said 50 leading CEOs have already joined it.

In This Issue

UNEP coordinates Gulf eco-assessment	1
Treaty revised to stop ozone loss	2
Climate change negotiations have begun	3
UNEP has free information service	3
Canada's Green Plan is a model for others	4
Public input sought on national reports	4
UNEP has active friends	5
New publications	5
Strategy drafted to protect biodiversity	6
"Green Nobels" to be awarded June 5th	7
UNEP sponsors General Assembly of Youth	7
General Assembly gives environment priority	8
UNEP plans Environmental Sabbath	8
Community coalition launches initiatives	9
Green think tank set up in Aspen, Colorado	9
Calendar	10
83 countries ban the import of wastes	10
Save-the-forests campaign gets results	11

UNEP North America News is published bimonthly by the United Nations Environment Programme. The UNEP mandate is to encourage and coordinate sound environmental practices everywhere. Headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, UNEP is staffed by 170 professionals worldwide. It is supported by voluntary contributions from governments. UNEP offices in this region are:

UNEP North America Office
Room DC2-0803
United Nations, NY 10017
Tel: (212) 963-8093
Fax: (212) 963-4116

UNEP Washington Office
1889 F Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: (202) 289-8456
Fax: (202) 289-4267

***Infoterra*, U.S.:** Linda Spencer
Tel: (202) 382-3522
Canada: Agatha Bystram
Tel: (613) 997-2485

***IRPTC*, U.S.:** Rachel Van Wingen
Tel: (202) 475-9709
Canada: Dr. Peter Toft
Tel: (613) 957-3133

The ***Infoterra*** network provides national and international environmental information. The ***International Register of Potentially Toxic Chemicals (IRPTC)*** answers queries about chemicals. Both UNEP services are free of charge. Material from **UNEP North America News** may be reproduced provided the UN Environment Programme is credited. Libby Bassett, editor.

United Nations Environment Programme
DC2-0803 United Nations
New York, NY 10017

Address Correction Requested

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
NEW YORK, NY
PERMIT NO. 2091

Printed on recycled paper

COURTESY OF UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME